



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Rockford, IL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Rockford for a Brownfields Pilot. The city is located in northern Illinois along the Rock River. It is the second-largest city in the state, with a population of 139,426. The Pilot targets a 9.5-square-mile area within the city containing 227 acres of identified brownfields and 1 million square feet of industrial and commercial space, designated as an Enterprise Zone (EZ) by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In addition to the blight of these brownfields, the EZ's 22,093 residents experience a 21 percent poverty rate and a 12.2 percent unemployment rate.

Historically, industry in Rockford has included farm equipment manufacturers, tanneries, blacksmiths, auto and auto parts manufacturers, and other heavy industrial businesses. As wages soared, facilities aged, and the economy slumped, industries fled the area, leading to a manufacturing and economic decline in Rockford as well as creating abandoned brownfields. In addition to questions regarding contamination, brownfields have remained undeveloped due to lack of financing and an abundance of greenfields both inside and outside the city.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Rockford, Illinois

Date of Announcement:
June 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets brownfields sites within the city's EZ for environmental assessments and re-development planning.

Contacts:

City of Rockford
Community Development
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Regional Brownfields Team
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(312) 353-3161

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

The City of Rockford focuses on both greenfields preservation and brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. By developing strategies to assist businesses with the environmental issues involved with potentially contaminated brownfields, the city will create additional employment opportunities for residents while at the same time preventing further loss of greenfields. The Pilot's objective is to assist the city by removing environmental uncertainty at the targeted sites and involving community stakeholders in the decision-making for the sites.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting an area-wide assessment of brownfields sites within the EZ;
- Completing 10 Phase I assessments and 4 Phase II assessments on sites within the EZ;
- Establishing a Brownfields Advisory Board to help administer the Pilot and provide guidance and input on a comprehensive brownfields redevelopment plan; and
- Developing cleanup action plans for six properties.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.